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University of Montana–Missoula. Office of University Relations, "UM Marks Martin Luther King Day with week of activities" (1994). *University of Montana News Releases, 1928, 1956-present*. 13141.
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The University of Montana

NEWS RELEASE

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This release is available electronically on INN (News Net).

Jan. 7, 1994

UM MARKS MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY WITH WEEK OF ACTIVITIES

MISSOULA --

The University of Montana will mark Martin Luther King Day with a full week of events that celebrate the life and legacy of the slain civil rights leader with a blend of entertainment, scholarship, remembrance and looking ahead.

Actress Tommie Harris Stewart, featured on the television series "In the Heat of the Night," will present a dramatic performance of poetry, song, dance and play excerpts depicting the image of the American black woman Friday, Jan. 21. Other events include a candlelight vigil and procession on Martin Luther King Day Monday, Jan. 17; a lecture, a panel discussion and film presentations.

"This is only the third year that Martin Luther King Day has been a holiday in the state of Montana," said Educational Opportunity Program Director Ray Carlisle, chair of UM's Martin Luther King Day Planning Committee. "I think that fact reflects some degree of cultural isolation.

"Having achieved the observance of the holiday in this state, the next challenge is for it not to be just another three-day weekend, but that we make it possible for people in Missoula to really engage the issues that Martin Luther King stood for," Carlisle said.

The Monday vigil, scheduled for 5:30 p.m. in the University Center mall, will feature short comments from University President George Dennison, Missoula Mayor Dan Kemmis, UM Black Student Union President Sam Thompson and other speakers. University Center lights will be dimmed for the candle lighting, and candles will be provided. A brief candlelight procession

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through campus will end the vigil, which is expected to last 45 minutes to an hour.

On Tuesday, a panel of students and community members will discuss "Breaking Down the Walls: Stereotyping From the Inside Out" at noon in the south end of the UC mall. "Eyes on the Prize," an acclaimed public television series about the civil rights struggle, will be shown in the UC mall from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

The movie "Boyz n the Hood" will be shown at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday in the University Theatre. The 1991 film, rated R, depicts inner city life for several friends in Los Angeles.

On Thursday, Stanford University history Professor Clayborne Carson will discuss "The Contemporary Significance of Martin Luther King, Jr.: The Man and the Myth" at 8 p.m. in the Montana Theatre. The event is part of this year's President's Lecture Series.

On Friday, Stewart will cap the week's events with her "informance" that has toured across the nation for Black History Month, national conventions, dinner theater and women's conferences. The show will begin at 7:30 p.m. in Urey Lecture Hall.

Stewart, director of theatre arts at Alabama State University, holds a doctorate from Florida State University and an honorary degree from Buena Vista College in Storm Lake, Iowa. Perhaps best known as Miss Etta Kibbee on "In the Heat of the Night," she has many other television, stage and movie credits including roles in "Mississippi Burning," "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" and "Beulah Land."

UM's celebration of King's legacy will continue into February, Black History Month, with an essay contest for undergraduate UM students. Entries, limited to 500 words or less, may address "any topic appropriate to the legacy of Martin Luther King," Carlisle said. The prize for the

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winning entry is \$250. Essays will be accepted from Jan. 21 through 5 p.m. Friday, Feb. 18, in Room 101 of the Liberal Arts Building. The winner will be announced by the end of February.

The week's events and the essay contest are sponsored by the UM President's Office and coordinated by the Martin Luther King Day Planning Committee.

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